

Message Text

CONFIDENTIAL

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45

ACTION DPW-01

INFO OCT-01 EUR-25 EA-11 ADP-00 IO-12 SSO-00 CCO-00 NSCE-00

USIE-00 INRE-00 CIAE-00 DODE-00 PM-09 H-02 INR-09

L-03 NSAE-00 NSC-10 PA-03 RSC-01 PRS-01 SS-14 RSR-01

/103 W

----- 022654

Z O 261615 Z MAR 73 ZFF-3

FM AMEMBASSY VIENTIANE

TO SECSTATE WASHDC FLASH 3255

INFO WHITE HOUSE FLASH

COMUSMACV FLASH

USDEL FMJMC SAIGON FLASH

JHRC, CLARK AIR FORCE BASE, P. I FLASH

CINCPAC IMMEDIATE

AMEMBASSY BANGKOK

AMEMBASSY MANILA

USDEL FRANCE

AMEMBASSY OTTAWA IMMEDIATE

C O N F I D E N T I A L VIENTIANE 2231

E. O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: MOPS, PFOR, CASC, LA

SUBJECT: RELEASE OF US POWS IN LAOS

REF: VIENTIANE 2058

SUMMARY: LPF HAS INFORMED US THAT NINE U. S. POWS CAPTURED IN LAOS WILL BE RELEASED TO U. S. AUTHORITIES MORNING OF MARCH 28 AT GIA LAM AIRPORT IN HANOI, END SUMMARY

1. AT 2100 MARCH 26, LPF DELEGATION VIENTIANE TELEPHONED DCM AND ASKED HIM TO COME URGENTLY TO LPF HEADQUARTERS. AT 2145 HOURS DCM DEAN, ACCOMPANIED BY CONSUL RAND, CALLED ON SOTH PHETRASY WHO TOLD US THAT LPF IN VIENTIANE HAD RECEIVED MESSAGE FROM PRINCE SOUPHANOUVONG WHICH SOTH WAS ASKED TO TRANSMIT TO AMERICAN EMBASSY. READING FROM
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A PAPER SOTH SAID THAT IN REPLY TO DCM' S MARCH 28 DEMARCHE IN WHICH U. S. REP HAD REQUESTED RELEASE OF 9 U. S. PRISONERS CAPTURED IN LAOS BY MARCH 28, LPF HAS HONOR TO INFORM THE EMBASSY THAT LPF AGREES TO THEIR RELEASE. ACCORDING TO SOTH, TELEGRAM FURTHER STATED THAT LPF HAD REQUESTED DRV ASSISTANCE IN HELPING WITH RELEASE OF THESE 9 PRISONERS. THEY WILL BE RELEASED TO U. S. AUTHORITIES IN HANOI ON MORNING OF MARCH 28 AT GIA LAM AIRPORT. THE RELEASE OF THESE PRISONERS IS SIGN OF LPF GOOD WILL AND IN APPLICATION OF FEBRUARY 21 VIENTIANE AGREEMENT. SOTH ASKED TO SEE U. S. REPRESENTATIVES AGAIN AT 0900 MARCH 27 TO DISCUSS FURTHER DETAILS REGARDING RELEASE. HOWEVER, IN REPLY TO OUR PRESSING QUESTIONS SOTH REITERATED THAT 9 PRISONERS IN QUESTION WILL BE RELEASED DIRECTLY TO U. S. AUTHORITIES IN HANOI. HE ADDED THAT PERHAPS CHIEF OF LPF REPRESENTATION IN HANOI, KHAMPAY, BOUPHA, MAY BE INVOLVED IN THE TRANSFER ARRANGEMENT, BUT PRISONERS WOULD BE HANDED OVER TO U. S. AUTHORITIES IN HANOI.

2. WE TOOK NOTE OF LPF MESSAGE AND AVOIDED OURSELVES OF OPPORTUNITY TO EMPHASIZE THAT WE HOPED AFTER RELEASE OF THESE 9 PRISONERS, LPF WOULD WORK WITH U. S. REPRESENTATIVES IN VIENTIANE IN EFFORT TO CLARIFY FATE OF OTHER U. S. MISSING IN LAOS. SPECIFICALLY, U. S. REPRESENTATIVES CALLED ATTENTION TO AT LEAST ONE U. S. PRISONER (DAVID L. HRDLICKA) WHO HAD BEEN SEEN ALIVE IN LAOS AND WHOSE PHOTOGRAPH WAS PUBLISHED IN A LPF PUBLICATION BUT WHOSE NAME HAD NOT APPEARED ON THE FEBRUARY 1 PRISONER LIST. SOTH REPLIED THAT TO BEST OF HIS KNOWLEDGE LPF DID NOT RPT NOT HOLD ANY U. S. PRISONERS OTHER THAN 9 BEING RELEASED ON MARCH 28. HOWEVER, HE NOTED THAT FEBRUARY 21 VIENTIANE AGREEMENT CALLS FOR CLARIFYING STATUS OF MIA' S AND HE VOICED WILLINGNESS TO DISCUSS THESE MATTERS WITH U. S. REPRESENTATIVES WITHIN THE FRAMEWORK OF VIENTIANE AGREEMENT AT A LATER STAGE.

3. WE ASKED WHETHER CANADIAN MISSIONARY OPEL WOULD BE RELEASED SAME TIME AS U. S. POWS. SOTH SAID THAT OPEL WOULD BE HANDLED SEPARATELY AND HE IS TRYING TO SEE CANADIAN ICC REP VIENTIANE TO INFORM HIM OF PROCEDURE. (WE HAVE SO INFORMED CANDEL).
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GODLEY

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